The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

WHOLE NO. 1596 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1941 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 31, NO. 45

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

A jury of twelve American citizens, sitting in the Federal District Court in New York, listened for almost a month to the evidence submitted in the case against George E. Browne and Willie Bioff and found them guilty of extortion.

No other verdict was possible. The evidence introduced by the Government was shocking; the defense pitiful by comparison.

In thanking the jury for the verdict, Federal Judge Knox declared that it should serve as a warning to anyone who seeks to exploit the labor movement for personal gain. We agree with him fully.

We feel impelled to speak plainly about this case because Browne was the president of an AFL union and Bioff was his appointed personal representative.

The law enforcement authorities of our country have done the labor movement a great service by ridding it of these men and placing them where lawbreakers belong, in jail. The defendants were not labor leaders, they were the betrayers of labor. They sold out the very workers whose interests they were sworn to protect. They deserve the severest punishment permissible under the law.

A Healthy Effect

There may be some, among those who sympathize with the cause of labor, who will regard the outcome of this case as a blow to labor. We think this attitude is short-sighted. We regard the conviction of Browne and Bioff as an encouraging and constructive development in the growth of the labor movement in America.

It has long been our contention that the basic reason for maladministration of labor unions, where it does exist, is the apathy of union members. Where the membership of a trade union is alert, the leadership of that union is clean. But when the membership is indifferent, the democratic processes in the affairs of a union are bound to go to pot. That is true not only of unions but of Government or any other democratic organization.

In this respect, the conviction of Browne and Bioff certainly must have a healthy influence. The workers of this country, reading about this case, are going to watch how their own unions are run much more carefully than ever before. They are going to attend meetings in greater numbers and ask more questions. That is as it should be. Union members must keep on their toes if they want their unions run right.

Certainly, the verdict will be beneficial to the members of the International Association of Theatrical Stage Employes who will now have the opportunity of cleaning out the Browne-Bioff type of racketeer rule and choosing honest and responsible leaders.

Enforce the Laws

We are sure that everyone will agree with the foregoing, but some of our friends will say: "How about the public? Won't they be more inclined now to agree with anti-labor propagandists that just because a few crooks have wormed their way into unions, the entire labor movement should be suppressed or crippled with legislative restrictions?"

To those we say—on the contrary. The Browne-Bioff case proves what the American Federation of Labor has all along contended—that the laws on our statute books today are all that is needed to wipe out racketeering. No new legislation is necessary. The jury itself is no grand jury, no prosecutor. It cannot move against wrongdoers in any autonomous national or international union because it has no legal authority to do so. But it does call upon the prosecuting authorities of our nation, states and cities to proceed against the betrayers of labor under Federal, State and local statutes just as fearlessly and effectively as the Government did in the Browne-Bioff case. That is the duty of our law enforcement agencies. We ask them to do their duty for the benefit of labor as well as the public as a whole.

Only 30 Seconds A Day Are Lost By AFL Strikes, Official Records Show

Washington, D. C.—From June through October 1941, time lost to the defense program by members of the Federation of Labor strikes was amounted to only 2 hours per man-year of work. That is 10¼ minutes in a month of work or 30 seconds in an 8-hour day. Time lost by accidents on the defense projects is from the 600,000 per year lost by American Federation of Labor strikes.

These figures were compiled by the American Federation of Labor's Monthly Survey from the official records of Government departments.

The time lost by strikes in the national defense being rendered day-in and day-out by the five million members of the AFL to the national defense program.

The text of the survey follows:

"America's defense production is to be doubled, and greatly speeded. Washington is developing a new Victory Program which will lift defense production from the $60,000,000 per month level to a new level of $2 billion, $108,000,000,000, and will speed the defense effort until it uses 50 per cent of the country's entire productive capacity. From today's rate of $18,000,000,000 a year, defense production will be raised to $50,000,000,000 a year. All but the bare essentials of civilian production will be eliminated, and the hope is to complete this gigantic change by next spring.

"With this new program America faces the grim realities. Hitler with anything less than a military machine far surpassing to invite wholesale slaughter of soldiers and civilians alike. unions' productive effort is to allow starvation and bombs killing to wipe out the peoples of conquered Europe, the nations with a great. Only by the swiftest possible rise of American military production can the world struggle be brought to quick conclusion.

"The American Federation of Labor has long recognized these facts. We have turned our efforts to speed defense production; we have supplied thousands of skilled men for building and other defense work. More than a year ago we established a policy of no strikes on defense work until all the resources of mediation and conciliation have been exhausted. Our record on defense strikes speaks for itself. From June through October 1941, time lost to the defense program by American Federation of Labor strikes has amounted to only 2 hours per man-year of work. That is 10¼ minutes in a month of work or 30 seconds in an 8-hour day. Time lost by accidents on the defense program is 13 times that lost by American Federation of Labor strikes.

"Defense production has gathered speed in recent months. The rise from July to September was greater than in the preceding seven months. As measured by contracts awarded and spending, the value of goods produced rose from $737,000,000 in January to $1,012,000,000 in July and $1,337,000,000 in September. Airplane production has almost doubled—from 1,000 planes a month at the start of 1941 to 1,900 in September, one large producer of tanks made 1,000 light tanks from August through October, equaling the previous 12 months' production; medium tank production, too, is speeding.

"This is encouraging, but we have far yet to go. While the changeover from civilian to defense production has made some progress, as yet very few of America's 184,000 manufacturing plants are doing defense work. The Army-Navy Munitions Board estimated that about 12,000 of these plants were suitable for defense production, but of these only 4,657 were doing any defense work whatever in the early September 1941. We suggest in passing that this record of industry's failure to take defense work be compared with the American Federation of Labor's record of time lost by strike, noted above."

Green Raps Wage Freezing Schemes; Calls for Action on Price Control

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, writing in the latest issue of the American Federationist, coupled a sharp attack on proposals for the freezing of wages with a demand that effective control of prices be placed in force without delay as knowledge became general in the capital that President Roosevelt finally endorses labor's opposition to wage ceilings.

The signed editorial in the official monthly organ of the A. F. of L., President Green said:

"Profits, like all other forms of income, are not prices but compensation for free human labor. In a free country, compensation for labor and service must continue to be based on contracts between free men, as the case of wages, by means of a contract determined by collective bargaining."

Green declared that the premature enactment of price-control legislation on the ground that fast-rising prices would lead to inflation. He pointed out that during the last war inflation "stole away" the benefits of wage increases.

"Wartime inflation ended in business collapse, unemployment, farm failures and a farm debacle that shook the foundations of our economic structure," President Green wrote.

Asserting that the cost of living is already 7.5 per cent above the levels which existed before the defense program and could be expected to rise at least 10 per cent unless effective control of prices is made effective quickly, he said the increase "indicates a trend which our previous experience demonstrated to be disastrous."

While insisting upon the vast difference between price control and restrictions on wages, Mr. Green said price control is extremely important to labor because "unless we have effective price control the very basis of collective bargaining and business stability will be destroyed."

"Unless we effective price control," he concluded, "defense will cost the millions more in debts than necessary to be put upon the future and will force us into intolerable inflation."

Action on price-control legislation is scheduled in the House of Representatives as soon as the Neutrality Act revision problem has been disposed of. Mr. Roosevelt and Administration leaders are reported opposed to any ceiling on wages in such legislation.

In a second editorial Mr. Green discussed the recent annual convention of the American Federation of Labor, emphasizing the convention's renewal of its pledge to stand four-square with its Government in its policy of defending democracy against the onslaughts of aggressor nations.

"We realize the welfare of workers depends upon the maintenance of democratic institutions and that only when such institutions prevail throughout the world can we have real security and the freest opportunity for human progress," Mr. Green wrote.

"We pledge ourselves to this cause without reservation. The greatest bulwark within this country has against unfreedom at home or abroad is its free labor movement."

In the second editorial Mr. Green urged Congress to act quickly to establish disability benefits under Social Security. He said that it is "high time" the insurance method was applied to "this widespread source of insecurity."

Roosevelt Asks "Sacrifice Now" In Closing Address to I. L. O. Meeting

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt climaxed the annual conference of the International Labor Organization by telling the delegates that the American people have made an "unlimited commitment" that there shall be a free world.

The President's address was delivered to 250 delegates from 35 nations who assembled in the White House for the closing session of the I.L.O. at his invitation.

They applauded when the President called upon the American people for "sacrifice now" so that there should be no difficulties were not made the excuse for "stopping," the War Department declared.

AFL DRESSMAKERS GIVE $10,000 TO RED CROSS

New York, N. Y.—Dressmakers Union Local No. 22, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, handed over to Norman H. Davis, head of the Red Cross, $10,000 to be used for medical aid to the Russian armies resisting the Nazi invaders. The $10,000, part of $26,000 raised by the Dressmakers British-Russian Medical Aid Fund, will be used to buy X-ray trailers and medical supplies.

meeting was a dinner given by President William Green of the American Federation of Labor to labor delegates to the conference. The American labor delegate was Robert J. Watt, international representative of the American Federation of Labor.

INSURANCE AGENTS GO A. F. L.

Washington, D. C.—Three elections held by the National Labor Relations Board among the Home Beneficial Life Insurance Company agents to determine whether they wanted the American Federation of Labor to represent them in collective bargaining resulted in decided victories for the AFL.

In Danville, Va., the vote was 20 for the AFL and none against; in Portsmouth, Va., 60 for the AFL and two against, and in Newport News, Va., 11 for the AFL and 10 against. The Industrial and Ordinary Insurance Agents Council announced that these three elections raised to eight the number of districts of the company in which the AFL has been chosen collective bargaining representative, involving 580 agents.

News Briefs

JAMES HOLLAND IS DEAD; EX-HEAD, NEW YORK AFL

New York, N. Y.—Organized labor in New York State mourns the death of James P. Holland, former president of the New York State Federation of Labor, a member of the City Board of Education and a power in labor circles. Mayors John F. Hylan and James J. Walker. He passed away at his home, 108-114 Washington Avenue, Rockaway Beach, Queens, where he had lived since 1915. He was 76 years old.

Mr. Holland was president of the State Federation of Labor from 1914 until 1926, and was active in city politics.

In 1934, he was appointed as the representative of labor to the City Charter Revision Commission. He resigned as president of the State AFL in 1926. He was then elected vice president and continued as a member of its executive council.

Mr. Holland was born on January 6, 1865, in Elizabeth, N. J., and moved to New York when he was 20 years old. He was first employed as a fireman with the old Kips Bay Brewing Company and later worked in a similar capacity with other brewing organizations. In 1897 he was a representative of the International Steam Engineers Union, Local 30, of the American Federation of Labor.

PENNSYLVANIA AFL PROBES PRIORITIES UNEMPLOYMENT

The executive council of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor has initiated a study to determine how much unemployment has been caused by priorities, James L. McDevitt, president of the Federation, announced.

The Federation has sent questionnaires to 2700 local unions in Pennsylvania affiliated with the AFL to find out the extent of defense orders throughout the State and the amount of unemployment caused by lack of materials due to priorities. The findings resulted from the study, together with recommendations, will be sent to President William Green of the American Federation of Labor.

Mr. McDevitt said many rural sections have been seriously affected by the closing of small plants manufacturing consumption goods. "Workers in such industries," he declared, "cannot get defense jobs in their own areas because of inadequate distribution of defense contracts among small producers."

He pointed out that all kinds of metal trade workers engaged in non-defense production have been hardest hit by priorities. In many cases their only choice is to leave non-defense jobs for defense jobs, which means leaving home.

RAIL WORKERS CHOOSE AFL UNIONS AS AGENTS

Washington, D. C.—The National Mediation Board announced the certification of a group of AFL unions as collective bargaining agents for railway employes following elections held in accordance with the provisions of the Railway Labor Act.

The International Association of Machinists, the International Association of Blacksmiths, Drop Forgers and Helpers and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association were designated to represent respectively the machinists, blacksmiths and sheet metal workers, their helpers and apprentices employed by the St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company of Texas. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers was designated to represent the electrical workers, their helpers and apprentices, employed by the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Company. The Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employes was designated to represent the clerical, office, station and storehouse employes of the Augusta Union Station Company.

The AFL affiliates in all these elections received a large majority of the votes cast.

TEXAS GOVERNOR APPOINTS UNION MAN TO STATE BOARD

Austin, Texas.—The Governor's office announced the appointment of Robert M. McKinley as labor member of the Texas Unemployment Compensation Commission to fill the unexpired term of Pat Moreland, resigned. Mr. McKinley is a former secretary of the Texas State Federation of Labor. He has been active in the affairs of organized labor for many years and has formerly been associated with the Social Security program.

LAUNDRY OPERATOR FINED FOR EMPLOYING MINOR

San Francisco, Calif.—Municipal Judge Clarence W. Morris fined a Chinese laundry operator here $100 for employing a fifteen-year-old boy in violation of the child labor provisions of the labor code which prohibit the employment of minors near machinery.

"This court will not countenance child labor violations," Judge Morris said in passing sentence. "Let this be a warning to all employers. They must not employ minors without permits and in violation of the labor code, as fail sentences as well as fines will be imposed."

UNION LABEL CHRISTMAS GIFTS URGED BY ORNBURN

Washington, D. C.—I. M. Ornburn, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union Label Trades Department, announced the annual drive urging Christmas shoppers to buy only union label gifts. While this important department of the American Federation of Labor carries on a continual campaign urging consumers to buy union label goods and to use union services, each year, because of the increased sales of merchandise during the holiday season, it asks members of labor unions, their families and friends to demonstrate the value of the union label to market by purchasing Christmas gifts presents from firms that display the union label, shop card and service button.

In an appeal to central labor unions, union label leagues and women's auxiliaries Mr. Ornburn said: "We urge you to make a union-to-union speaking campaign. Have your union label committee make a merchant-to-merchant campaign asking them to sell only union label goods. Ask both members of labor unions and women's auxiliaries to make a home-to-home drive for union label goods and union services. There is no better way to show your loyalty to brother trade unionists than to buy union label gifts. Let's make it a Merry Union Label Christmas!"

LABOR PRAISES MRS. ROOSEVELT

Meany Calls Her Great Force for Progress in America

New York City.—George Meany, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, praised Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt as a great force for progress, humanitarianism and good citizenship in America.

These and many more warm tributes were bestowed upon the wife of President Roosevelt at a testimonial dinner in her honor in which more than a thousand local labor unions participated.

Mr. Meany and Sidney Hillman, Associate Director of OPM, pleaded for labor support of the national defense program. Pledging their full cooperation of the American Federation of Labor in the task of defeating Hitlerism, Mr. Meany warned that any labor disputes to prevent interruptions of defense production.

In the same vein, Mr. Hillman declared the American people will have to stop thinking in terms of "business as usual" and labor will have to prevent "strikes as usual."

Mrs. Roosevelt called on organized labor to take the lead in the task of civilian defense by enlisting its local organizations for that purpose.

Saying that Mrs. Roosevelt represented "everything we hold dear in American life," Mr. Meany declared that organized labor was fully aware of the issues involved in the international crisis and was determined to defend with all its power both the spiritual and material assets of the United States.

Others who joined in praising Mrs. Roosevelt included Fiorello LaGuardia, Lieutenant Governor Poletti and Senator Wagner, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

President May Intervene to Avert Threat of National R. R. Strike

Railway Unions Deeply Disappointed by Findings of Wage Board

Chicago, Ill.—President Roosevelt is expected to intervene promptly to prevent a critical nation-wide railroad strike.

Deeply disappointed by the wage recommendations of the Emergency Board appointed by the President, representatives of 1,250,000 railroad workers were meeting here to consider ways and means of averting the strike.

The wage recommendations were promptly rejected by the railroad brotherhoods, while the leaders of the non-operating railroad unions, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, scheduled a formal conference to determine future action.

While B. M. Jewell, president of the Railway Employes Department of the American Federation of Labor, declared that no announcement of the position of the fourteen non-operating railroad organizations would be forthcoming until after a meeting of the general chairmen, it was freely predicted they, too, will reject the Emergency Board's findings.

Meanwhile, from Washington came reports that President Roosevelt was considering steps to avert a strike, which would cripple the defense program. Just what action he may take was a matter of wide speculation but it was felt that an upward revision of the wage recommendations made by the board would be required.

The board's report offered the railway unions less than a third of the wage increases that were demanded. Briefly stated, the recommendations were:

1—A 7½ per cent wage increase for the employes represented by the five transportation brotherhoods.

2—Wage increases of three cents an hour for employes represented by the non-operating unions and of 7½ cents an hour for Railway Express Agency employes.

3—A minimum wage of 45 cents an hour for railroad and express employes and of 40 cents for employes of the short line railroads.

Apparently, the members of the Emergency Board were overcome by fears of general inflation in making their wage recommendations rather than giving their consideration to the merits of the case at hand.

The brotherhoods had demanded a 30 per cent increase for their members, while the non-operating organizations had asked a boost of 30 cents an hour to equalize railroad pay rates with wages paid for similar work in other industries.

"As a whole the board's recommendation is the most disappointing of any recommendation handed by a Federal tribunal in the last fifty years," said a statement issued in behalf of the five brotherhoods.

President Thomas C. Cashen of the Railway Clerks declared himself "disappointment" that a new principle, the issue of inflation, "was injected into the proposed wage increase."

40 CENTS MINIMUM WAGE SET IN TWO INDUSTRIES

Washington, D. C.—General Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor, announced that he had signed wage orders requiring payment of at least 40 cents an hour in the seamless hosiery knitting and men's woven, underwear and commercial knitting industries, effective November 24.

About 8,000 of the 198,000 employes in the woolen textile industry will receive pay raises as a result of the new minimum. The 40 cent minimum for the underwear and commercial knitting industry will increase the wages of about 15,000 of the 68,000 employes, located for the most part in New England and the South.

Army Extols Union Aid in Defense; Denies Smears by Labor-Haters

Washington, D. C.—Months ago, during the height of the army's cantonment construction program, enemies of labor raised a great furor about jurisdictional strikes and "high initiation fees" holding up the program.

Congressional committees conducted "sensational" investigations and newspapers filled their pages with fantastic stories about supposed abuses practiced by the unions.

But now the War Department has put out a report on the construction projects, called the "greatest in modern times," and has exploded all the charges made against labor.

Instead delaying the program by strikes, labor did a remarkable job in finishing all housing projects and other buildings for draftees in record time, the report pointed out.

It cited the fact that at the peak of the program a half million men were employed, drawn from all over the country, and they performed 56,700,000 man-days of labor. Out of that vast total, "only 42,000 man-days were lost as a result of work stoppages," the report declared.

"This means that less than one-tenths of one per cent of the man-days worked were lost due to labor difficulties," the War Department stressed.

Even more significant is that the report takes the ground out from under the claims made by enemies of labor that unions carried on "initiation fee" rackets."

The Department made it clear there was nothing to criticize in the methods pursued by the unions.

"The right of unions to collect fees and dues is supported by statute and tradition," the report emphasized.

In addition, the document justified the practice of some local unions in requiring payment of a fee by unionists who come from other areas, pointing out that such locals considered it necessary to maintain their independence and autonomy and protect their territorial integrity."

Jurisdictional strikes have been enormously exaggerated by anti-labor propagandists, they did not cause any serious difficulties for the program, the report revealed.

"The governing bodies of the unions made strong efforts to see that such difficulties were not made the excuse for stopping," the War Department declared.

"Stop Sell-Out," R. R. Unions Theme In Fighting C. I. O. Raids on Members

Washington, D. C.—Efforts of some C. I. O. groups to "raid" established standard railroad unions are encountering a number of carriers were met with vigorous counter-attacks by the rail unions.

C. I. O. organizers have been making extravagant promises but have made no headway. Labor chiefs declared, in each case the standard unions launched a militant counter-offensive.

The General Chairmen's Association on the Central and System Federation No. 109 of the A. F. of L. Railway Employes' Department on the Reading distributed powerfully-written circulars denouncing the "raid" and puncturing the claims made by the C. I. O.

"Stop the Sell-Out" was the caption on the circulars, which pointed out that a handful of "disgruntled employes and soreheads" were trying to jeopardize conditions built up after years of struggle by the Standard unions.

The circulars cited the fact that "without the loss of a single man-hour of work through strikes," the rail unions have put through an impressive list of benefits for rail members.

Comparing actual achievements, the circulars cited the fact that the Railroad Retirement Act pays rail workers up to $120 a month in pensions, but that under the Social Security Act, C. I. O. miners, in some instances with as much as 30 years of service, draw as little as $30 a month on retirement.

As for job protection, it was contended that the C. I. O. has obtained little more than "a bunch in the sack and a place in the breadline" for persons thrown out of work, while the Railroad Retirement Act contained provisions that under the Social Security Act, C. I. O. miners, in some instances with as much as 30 years of service, draw as little as $30 a month on retirement.

As for job protection, it was contended that the C. I. O. has obtained little more than "a bunch in the sack and a place in the breadline" for persons thrown out of work, while the Railroad Retirement Act contained provisions that under the Social Security Act, C. I. O. miners, in some instances with as much as 30 years of service, draw as little as $30 a month on retirement.

Security protection has existed for years on the railroads, while the C. I. O. miners, for example, have no such safeguard, the circulars declared.

In a further attack on the C. I. O. raiders, the circulars made it clear that the C. I. O. program is a "hogwash of empty promises," because no one in its group "understands railroad operations or railroad workers' problems."

"Our fight is with the railroad management, not with other labor organizations," the circulars emphasized. "Again we say, stop the sell-out! Don't let the C. I. O. bargain away everything you now hold dear."